(c) whether, due to slow demining operation in Rajasthan, the farmers are not getting back their land for farming purposes;

(d) the areas of cultivable land which are yet to be returned back to the farmers of Rajasthan; and

(e) the steps contemplated by Government to expedite the operation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) Mines are being recovered by a combination of manual, mechanical and explosive means.

(b) The methods used by the Army to de-mine minefields is universally accepted and is currently used in de-mining operations through out the world. De-mining is an extremely hazardous and time-consuming operation. Mine recovery/breaching is being undertaken by adopting 100% safety precautions. Prevention of casualties, Army and civilians is the bedrock of this philosophy.

(c) and (d) . The land, which has been completely demined is handed over to the farmers/owners in the presence of State Government officials and village representatives. The information regarding the area of the land mined/demined cannot be disclosed for 'security' reasons.

(e) The Government has taken necessary steps to augment the existing resources with highly advanced equipment available internationally, so as to facilitate safe and expeditious completion of the on-going demining process.

Modernisation of Ordnance Factories during Tenth Plan

3422. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Ordnance Factories in the country;

(b) whether Government have a proposal for the modernisation and expansion of some of these factories during Tenth Plan;

(c) if so, the fund earmarked therefor; and

(d) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL) : (a) There are 39 Ordnance Factories in the country. The 40th factory is being set at Nalanda, Bihar.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) An investment of Rs. 1456 crores under Renewal & Replacement (RR) head and Rs. 348 crores under New Capital (NC) head is envisaged during the tenth plan.

(d) Modernisation of the ordnance factories is being carried out to reduce the cost of production, enhance the product quality, optimise manpower and bring in flexibility to cater to changing product-mix. During the process of modernisation, automation is also being introduced in the ordnance factories in selected areas like auto-gantry robots, material handling manipulators, auto-gauging units, automatic packing plants etc. The modernisation plan covers production of ammunition & explosives, weapons, transport vehicles, armoured vehicles, small arms and equipment items.

Consumption of CSD Liquor

3423. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI :

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that liquor procured from Canteen Supply Depot (CSD), meant for defence personnel, is being served at parties in the premises of a hotel as reported in the media; and

(b) if so, whether Government has made any enquiry into the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMANLAL GUPTA) : (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the news reported by the media. However, the facts are being ascertained.

Signing of agreement with M/s. FXC International U.S.A.

3424. SHRI MURLI DEORA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any agreement was signed with M/s. FXC International of U.S.A. for supply of pilot parachutes and brake parachutes in January, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the firm encashed the letter of credit in August, 1996 on the basis of a target document;